



## GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

### Testimony for Raised Bill's S.B. 1057, S.B. 1064 and H.B. 5004.

Chair Flexer, Chair Blumenthal Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco and Members of the GAE Committee, my name is Timothy De Carlo, and I am a Registrar of Voters from the City of Waterbury, the Chair of the New Haven County ROVAC Association and the Chairman of ROVAC Legislative Committee. I welcome the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the three early voting proposals that are before the committee. ROVAC is happy to weigh in on these important bills as our members will be those who administer this new law in Connecticut.

ROVAC is in support of the majority of S.B. 1057, of the three proposals, we feel that ten days is the right amount of time needed to administer Early Voting for State and Federal Elections. **We would ask that the Committee consider allowing for a shorter period for Municipal Elections.**

**S.B. 1064 and H.B. 5004 include language for early voting for Referenda Elections, this is a measure that ROVAC is opposed to.** Referendums would be extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible to conduct early voting for that style of election. Conducting early voting on referendums will create great difficulties for many towns, especially those that require their annual budgets created by their Councils or Boards of Selectman to be approved by the voters. Town charters and laws have required timeframes for the Councils to have the referendums following the processes that they must follow to get to a budget proposal. Further, if the voters reject the referendum proposal, some towns require the Town Council to conduct another referendum every two weeks until the budget passes with the voters. That does not leave time to conduct 10, 14 or 18 days of early voting. Therefore ROVAC would ask that whichever proposal is approved by the committee, it does not include early voting for Referenda Elections.

The Early Voting proposals allows for one Early Voting location, and if necessary a second location that can be requested in writing to the Secretary of the State's office. ROVAC supports this proposal, we would however like to **ask the Secretary of the State's office for help in identifying locations in smaller towns that are unable to occupy a municipal owned location for a period of ten days or longer.** Some towns may need to look to use temporary trailers or other means in order to have a dedicated location. This would be a rare occurrence but an issue that some fear could take place.

All three proposals before the committee allow for the storage of cast and sealed early voting ballots to be stored in the Town/City Clerk's vault. ROVAC supports this measure but would also like to **suggest that an additional option be considered.** Due to the fact many Town Clerk's offices close around 4:00 PM, allowing for the Registrars in those towns to store the ballots in a fire proof safe, that both Registrars would have access to for overnight storage.

There are two additional recommendations that ROVAC would respectfully ask the committee to consider. **One, requiring mail-in registrations to conclude prior to early voting beginning.** Many voters update their information through either the DMV or online voter registration. If updated information is continually being processed it would require the paper "Official Voters" list to be re-printed daily. Those voters who need to update their information can do so at the Early Voting location and can be written into the back of the Official List. **Two, ROVAC would also ask the Committee to consider allowing more time between when Early Voting ends and Primary of General Election takes place.** Under the current proposal Registrars would only have two days to finish any last minute details that need to be addressed. Between polling place set-up, poll worker training, and the time it takes to get election equipment tested, this would be a great help.

There are things to consider regarding when implementing Early Voting for the first time in Connecticut. ROVAC feels that a bar coding system should be created for use, similar to what the Town Clerk's use in the Connecticut Voter Registration System, (CVRS). Allowing for a form of barcoding would help cut down on the time it would take to cross off those who have voted, otherwise Registrars would be required to manually enter into the system for every early voting ballot cast.

**ROVAC also supports having the Secretary of the State's office certify a list of electronic polls books to be used in conjunction with Early Voting.** One issue that is currently before us is those who register to vote at the Early Voting Location will not appear on the Official Voting list as they were not on the list when it was printed prior to the start of Early Voting. The easiest way to add the new elector to the Official List would be to allow for the use of the electronic poll book that would instantly add the name once the citizen is entered into CVRS. The use of this technology would also allow the Town Clerk to check-in any received absentee ballots. Once an absentee ballot is checked-in, the voters name would be instantly crossed-off on the electronic poll book used in the early voting location. If some form of updated technology is not provided, the Registrars will have only two days after the conclusion of early voting.

The early voting proposals all include for a program to be administered by the Secretary of the State's office for the use of informing the public about Early Voting. **ROVAC would respectfully request that a poll worker recruitment program all be included in the informational program.** It has been increasingly difficult to recruit poll workers to work on Election Day. Many of our current poll workers are high school and college students, these workers will be unable to assist with early voting as they will be in school while the early voting location is open. Therefore we will need to find significant amounts of people to help staff these locations as well as our Election Day polling places.

Early voting will need to be reported to the Secretary of the State by district, this is the same for EDR, absentee and polling place ballots. In larger cities it takes over 4000 manual entries in order to submit the election results to the Secretary of the State. As we have increased the amount of tabulations that will need to be entered, **it may be time to review the statutory deadline of having results sent in by mid-night after the election has concluded.** We are currently using an all paper system and then taking those results and entering them into electronic databases in order to submit the results. If we are to remain with a paper based voting system allowing more time for submission may be necessary in order to assure that the proper and correct numbers are submitted.

**Finally, ROVAC would like to ask the Committee to help with supporting our request for state funding for early voting** as this will be a huge financial undertaking for municipalities, many of which have already submitted budgets for FY 23-24 that do not include funding for early voting. In order to administer early voting, Registrars will need not only more poll workers but also funding for additional printing costs associated with ballots. We will need more funding the cost of coding each ballot style, this is an impact on the larger cities that have more than one ballot style. These three proposals also create Primary Day-

Registration, which would allow for those who are not registered and those who are not affiliated with a political party to do so during the Primary Election. The majority of voters in large cities and throughout Connecticut tend to be unaffiliated with a political party, allow the voters to register or affiliate will require the towns to order an additional amount of ballots in order to be able to properly process those voters. Any additional support from the State of Connecticut to fund these new costs would go a great way in helping not only the Registrars who are administering early voting, but the municipalities that will be required to fund this new form of voting in our state.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this afternoon. ROVAC is committed to working to strengthen elections in Connecticut. Therefore, we are more than willing to work with any parties to create JFS language should the committee wish to do so on this pending legislation.